

Worth of Classical Study
Thesis
by

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Of what value is a college education? Are those students who spend years in the study of Latin and Greek repaid for their labor? We think they are, and in the following thesis, we hope to sustain our conclusion with fair arguments. But first let us decide what is the object of an education at all. Is it to gain positive knowledge? If so the farmer boy, or the boy who has just finished his apprenticeship has more positive knowledge of his business, than the student has of any one vocation, for the former has had practice with theory, while the latter has had nothing but theory. The object then of a college education is not to gain positive knowledge. What then is the object of four years of toil in college? It is to acquire ability - not knowledge. Knowledge is of no avail without ability to use it. To learn how to handle oneself, so to speak, so that whatever business we may go about we may go about it intelligently and with far greater assurance of success. Perhaps we can best illustrate our idea of the object of a college education by saying that as in the education of a child the first object is to acquire a familiarity with the English language, as the tool to be used in the mastery of other subjects, so the object of a college education is to gain a

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familiarity with the tools to be used in our life work.
This illustration, though the best we have on hand, is not
full. Beside the familiarity with the tools, there is needed
the power or ability to use them skillfully and intelligent-
ly. This last element, i. e. the development of power, we
think is the most important of the two. However without
discussing this question, we conclude that the object of
a college education is two fold, to gain a familiarity
with tools and the development of power. Having
now before us a definite idea of the object of a col-
lege education, what course of study is best fitted
to accomplish this object? We answer in our opinion,
the classical. The reasons for this faith that in us ex-
ist are these. The classical study strengthens the faculties
of the mind. Whatever occupation a man may enter
three faculties of the mind are called into action.
The reason, judgment and comparison. These fac-
ulties are constantly employed whether a man preaches
in the pulpit, pleads at the bar, teaches in the class-
room, pushes the plow, guides the plow or swings
the sledge. There are no studies so eminently fitted
for the development of these faculties of the mind
as Latin and Greek. In the translation of every sen-
tence, comparison must be used, in discriminating
the different shades of thought of the several words.

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of almost similar meaning judgment must be used in selecting the right word and reason in its application. So then is the brain, like the muscle is developed by constant practice. Years of continued application gives to the mind strength and power. This is the secret of that reserved force, which is the inviolable characteristic of the classical scholar. However close may be his reasoning. However brilliant his oratory, However potent his arguments, one feels in his presence that he has not exhausted himself, that behind it all there is still left a fund of reserved force. But this cultivation of the faculties of the mind is not the only source of power in the study of a modern author the student picks up the book, reads it through, and glances the thing at it contains. But in the study of a Latin or Greek, he is surrounded with his lexicon, dictionary his atlas and his grammar. In the former study he may read along dreamily, taking in only the thought of the author, perhaps not half of that. In the latter study he is compelled to think for himself, to look up rules, references, biographies and places, as well as from the slowness of the process, imbibing a more complete understanding of the author. Thus a stock of general information is acquired, which is a source

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of power.

But the popular voice says they are difficult, impractical and soon forgotten. It is always found that the end attained corresponds to the efforts put forth. A smooth sea never made a skillful mariner. - Tempests try the pilot, nor is it in the hot-bed shielded from every storm. But high on the Alpine cliff where the storm wind howls with its greatest glory, grow the toughest plants are found. So in the acquisition of an education, if we would become deeply, broadly, liberally educated, we cannot afford to even if it were possible to be carried through college on flowery beds of ease" but must face difficulties, must overcome obstacles. For thus alone is manly strength gained. Were we to cross the Rocky Mountains on a journey to California, no one would dispute that the climbing of those grand old mountains, the breathing of the pure mountain air, the grandeur of the scenery we beheld would invigorate and benefit us, but would it be necessary to keep them before us and be ever climbing them? As to their practicality, we are not arguing against that education desired by the man who lives for self. If a man desires an education simply that he may further his own selfish ends, that he may become skillful in the tricks

of trade, and accumulate gain, then we would advise him not to take the classical course. but if he would be useful to himself and those about him, if he would acquire the ability to write to speak, to think, to move his fellow men, to raise humanity to a higher plane of thought, then he cannot afford to neglect the classical languages. As language is the means of the communication of thought - and as our thoughts are conveyed according to the language in which they are clothed, then he who has the best power of clothing his thoughts in language, has the best power of communicating them and of making himself understood.

Having also the power and command of language, he has the means by which he can influence his fellow men, There is no means so well adapted to acquire this copiousness of words and facility of expression as a study of Latin and Greek. So then if a man is engaged in any profession in which he needs to influence his fellows there is nothing of more practical importance than a knowledge of the classics. Let us be understood to confine classical culture not to professional men alone for what business is there in which a man does not need to influence his fellow men? Beside the drill and discipline will make the farmer a better farmer, the mechanic

a better mechanic and the blacksmith a better blacksmith

Classical vs modern languages

One of the arguments common yet pungent of the superiority of the classics, is the fact that they aid in the study of other languages. Far no less an authority than John Stuart Mill says: "The mastery of Latin makes it easier to learn four or five of the continental languages than it is to learn one without it - beside aiding in the mastery of the modern languages. It is almost indispensable in order to rightly appreciate modern literature. He who studies modern literature without the aid of the classics loses half of its charm, force, and associations. How could it be otherwise? since the modern languages have their foundation in and are embedded in the ancient? besides modern civilization is largely derived from the civilizations of Greece and Rome."

So widely are the quotations and references to the authors of antiquity sprinkled through our literature, that it is both more interesting and intelligent to the classic eye.

Again modern languages are the languages of people of the living present. They are used by people whose conditions, customs and manners are

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caught up in the current thought of the day.
But if we would know well the conditions, customs,
customs, manners, in a word, the history of the classic
peoples. There is no means so potent as that of their
languages. Some say, you can get a knowledge of
their history and literature, by reading them
in translations. In reply we would say a very little
experience confirms the fact that more than half
of the beauty, charm, life are lost in translations.
Translations have about the same resemblance
to their originals as the artificial, hus, to the fresh
and newly blown rose.

The modern languages are much easier to learn and
therefore do not develop the mental muscle that
the classics do. It is by rigid exercise that the arm
of the blacksmith grows large and strong. So
by rigid exercise the mind develops. On this point
alone we would stake the issue of this question.
Let it be understood that we do not wish to discour-
age modern language study, not at all, only, we do
say that they are out of place when they take the
place of the classics.

again it is said, sometimes, that short Saxon words
such as are found in the Bible and in the house-
hold are more forcible than words derived from

Latin and Greek. It is true, that one may express himself, decisively and even eloquently in short Saxon words. But if he would rise to grandeur of thought, if he would express the pent up emotions of his soul, if he would express the thought that swells into grandeur, grows or well stored mind, he needs that volubility of words, attained only by a study of the classics.

Latin and Greek vs. the Sciences.

As we believe that the modern languages, would be more advantageously studied, if the mind has been prepared by the thorough drill of Latin and Greek, so we believe the sciences, instead of taking their place, should come after the study of the classics. Then will the student not only be much more familiar with the terms which he uses; but from his discipline of mind he will be enabled to discriminate closely between orders and classes and will have a trained judgment in the arranging of his classes and orders. These two qualities of mind, discrimination and judgment are the qualities of mind, especially required by the scientist and are the qualities, especially developed by the study of Latin and Greek.

We would in no manner slight the sciences, only we do not mean to allow them to exclude the classics, which should hold their place in the college course, by their

time honored sanction and by their general usefulness
not only are the terms used in science much better un-
derstood by the classical scholars but they are used
much more intelligently and skillfully by him.
The sanction of all the great scientists is sufficient
proof on this point. Study not the classics to the exclu-
sion of science nor science to the exclusion of the classics
but rather seek the golden mean; otherwise we will be
one sided, our education will not be symmetrical, we
will be men in some respects and dwarfs in others,
or what is sometimes seen in our University, we may
be a great wrangler in the higher mathematics and
— an infant among men.

The classics being dead languages, they furnish the terms
for science and terms that are recognized and used by
all nations. As rapid progress is being made in sci-
ence, new terms are called for and the ancient lan-
guages being the store house that furnishes them
we believe that in the near future science itself will
demand a knowledge of the classics.

Opinions of the Educated.

There is a prevalent idea among the educated, who neg-
lected the classics in their college course, that their edu-
cation is not quite complete, that there is something
wanting. Many of my own class-mates, who are now

on the threshold of graduation and have taken other
courses have expressed themselves in this manner
to me. This thought proves, at least, that the class-
ics are respected by educated and intelligent
men. Is it not true even that the majority of the great
scientific men are classical men? Huxley stops in
the midst of a scientific explanation to give a pan-
egyric on the classics. As in a law suit the character of
the witnesses has great influence, so in giving the opin-
ions of some of the following, let us also consider
their position and means of knowing where of they
speak. President Hurlbert of Middlebury college
says "we are disposed to deplore the injury done to high
education by dropping the classics as in the modern
fashion". Mr. Porter, President of Yale and author of
Human Intellect, says "The controuersies of the last
few years, in respect to the humane and literary
studies establishes the fact beyond question, that
there is no substitute for classical culture".

Lord Macaulay in speaking of the disciplinary power
of Latin and Greek says, "we believe that men who
have been engaged up to one or two and twenty
in studies which have no immediate connection with
any business and of which the effect is to open, invig-
orate and strengthen the mind, will generally be

found in the business of every profession superior to
men who have at eighteen or nineteen devoted them-
selves to the special studies of their calling." Although
classical culture and ~~pol~~ politics are almost as much
opposed to each other as the opposite poles of a mag-
netic needle. Yet according to Prof. Hightengall
from the 125,000 classically educated men since the
founding of Harvard college, have been taken the men
who have filled three fourths of the offices of highest
rank, and one half of the offices of second rank,
since the foundation of the government, of the Pres-
idents, Vice Presidents, members of the cabinet
and supreme judges three fourths have been clas-
sical graduates, including our late lamented
Gen. Garfield. The man to day ~~with~~ at the head
of the British Government, who carries in
his massive brain so thorough a knowledge
of the government of the British ~~Empire~~ and
their relations with all Europe, is one of England's first
classical scholars.

With a statement from Sen. P. Marshall scholar and
politician we will close, "I do but echo the univers-
al opinion of all persons capable to pronounce upon
the subject. In expressing my own opinion that
the language and literature of ancient Greece con-

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stimulates the most efficient instrument of mental
training ever employed by man, and a familiarity
that wonderful speech, its poetry, its philosophy,
its eloquence, and the history it embodies its
incomparable the most valuable of intellectual
possessions ever enjoyed by man.

Finiis.